

Fast Facts 36

Vehicle Registration Permits



DMV-Issued Vehicle Registration Permits

- Vehicle Moving Permit
- Temporary Operating Permit (TOP)
- One Trip Permit
- Nonresident Commercial Trip Permit

Why Are Vehicle Registration Permits Issued?

Vehicle registration permits are generally issued by Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to the owner or agent acting with the owner's knowledge and consent to legally operate or move a vehicle on California roadways when the vehicle has current registration fees on deposit, valid planned nonoperation (PNO) status on record, or is exempt from the PNO law but license plates and stickers have not been issued. You may be subject to citation or vehicle impoundment if the vehicle is operated without current registration or a vehicle registration permit. (Payment of use tax is usually not required until the application is completed.)

Vehicle registration permits **must** be:

- Obtained prior to the vehicle being driven, moved, towed, parked, or left standing on public streets or highways.
- Readily available for inspection by law enforcement.
- Presented to DMV, upon request, when the vehicle is registered.

IMPORTANT: Vehicle registration permit issuance does not exempt vehicles from liability insurance laws.

Vehicle Moving Permit (California Vehicle Code [CVC] §§4002 & 11716)

A **no-fee** vehicle moving permit is valid for **one** day and issued to allow movement of vehicles:

- With a PNO on file from the current place of storage to another place of storage.
- To or from a garage or repair shop for the purpose of repairs or alteration.
- For the purpose of dismantling or wrecking.
- From one place to another for the purpose of:
 - Inspection by DMV or the California Highway Patrol (CHP).
 - Assignment or verification of a vehicle identification number (VIN).
 - Inspection of pollution (smog) control devices.
 - Weighing the vehicle.
 - Obtaining brake/light certificates.
- That are incomplete or under construction.
- By a dealer, distributor, or manufacturer from their place of business to a place where the vehicle will be altered or supplied.
- By a dealer, distributor, manufacturer, remanufacturer, or transporter, from a vessel, railroad depot, or warehouse to a warehouse or salesroom.
- From an impound yard.

The date you choose must be within 60 days from the issue date. It must be entered on the permit by you or an authorized DMV, CHP, Auto Club, or Business Partner Automation agent, and endorsed by the agent.

Temporary Operating Permit (TOP) (CVC §4156)

- One **no-fee TOP** may be issued for:
- Nonresident vehicle registration.
- Original registration or transfer of ownership when a vehicle fails a smog inspection. You must present the most recent failed smog inspection, Bureau of Automotive Repair (BAR) referee inspection appointment card, or proof that smog parts are on order. **NOTE:** Family member transfers are subject to the \$50 TOP fee and 60-day limit when a biennial smog certification is due for registration renewal.
- Vehicles referred to CHP for inspection or VIN assignment.
- Commercial vehicles having difficulty filing federal heavy vehicle use tax.
- Impounded vehicles after registration fees are paid. **NOTE:** If a biennial smog is due and more than 60 days have passed since the registration expiration date or date removed from PNO, only a 1-day vehicle moving permit may be issued.
- Salvage retention vehicles being revived, after brake/light certificates are submitted.

NOTE: A **TOP** cannot be issued unless you submit:*

- Original registration or transfer fees.
- Renewal fees, if the registration expires within 30 days.
- Proof of insurance, if required.
- Brake/light certificates, if required.

*Other requirements may apply.

One \$50 TOP may be issued to vehicles registered in areas subject to the **biennial** (every other year) **smog** certification program that failed the smog inspection.

A \$50 biennial smog TOP is valid for 60 days from either the:

- Registration expiration date.
- Date removed from PNO status.

EXAMPLE: On 8/1/13, the vehicle registration expired or was removed from PNO and required a biennial smog certification. The vehicle fails the smog inspection and evidence of the failed smog inspection is presented on 9/1/13. A biennial smog TOP may be issued through 10/1/13.

A \$50 biennial smog TOP cannot be issued unless you submit:

- Registration renewal fees.
- The failed smog inspection.
- Proof of insurance for the vehicle.
- A \$50 (nonrefundable) TOP fee.

NOTE: Only one biennial smog TOP may be issued to the same vehicle within a 2-year period. After the 60-day period, your vehicle may be eligible for a 1-day vehicle moving permit.

Can the Biennial TOP Fee Be Waived?

The \$50 biennial smog TOP fee is waived for customers who present a BAR Letter of Eligibility authorizing participation in the Consumer Assistance Program (CAP). For CAP program information, contact BAR at autorepair.ca.gov or 1-866-272-9642.

One Trip Permit (CVC §4003)

A one trip permit may be issued for a fee, in lieu of California registration, to move a vehicle required to be registered:

- When unladen, for one continuous trip from a place within California to a place in **or** outside California or from outside California to a place in California (by the **most direct** route).
- For participation as a vehicular float or display in a lawful parade or exhibition for one round trip from one place to another. The total round trip cannot exceed 100 miles and must be completed within 60 days.

A one trip permit is valid for a nonresident:

- To move a newly purchased trailer coach into California.
- Member of the armed forces to move an unregistered trailer coach they own into, out of, or within California.

IMPORTANT: A one trip permit **cannot** be used to move a crane or trailer coach owned by a California resident.

Blank one trip permits may be purchased in volume from any DMV office.

Issuing a one trip permit does not affect California tax requirements. For sales and use tax information, contact the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration (CDTFA) at cdtfa.ca.gov or 1-800-400-7115.

Nonresident Commercial Trip Permit (CVC §§4004 & 9260)

A nonresident commercial trip permit may be issued, for a \$45 fee, to a commercial vehicle in compliance with the registration requirements of another state with which California has a vehicle licensing reciprocity agreement.

A commercial trip permit:

- Is completed and dated by you prior to use.
- Is valid for 4 consecutive days.
- Allows the vehicle to be operated laden within or outside of California.
- **Cannot** be issued for vehicles based in California and operated by a person having an established place of business within California. A vehicle is considered based in California if it is primarily operated or dispatched from, garaged, serviced, or maintained at a site with a California address.
- Requires a CDTFA California Fuel Trip (CFT) Permit (CDTFA-123-EREG REV. 1 [8-19]) if the vehicle is powered by a fuel other than gasoline.
- **Cannot** be used for vehicles last registered in Mexico.

Other DMV-Issued Permit and Registration Information

- *California Vehicle Code* (CVC) sections:
 - Nonresident Daily Commuter Permit—§§6700.25 & 6700.3
 - Commercial Trailer One Trip Permit—§4003.5
 - Motorcycle Transportation Permit—§§38088 & 38232
 - Temporary Nonresident Commercial Registration—§§4004 & 9260
 - Temporary Registration for Exempt School Bus—§§5010 & 9266
 - Temporary Registration for a Privately-Owned School Bus—§9102.5
- The following DMV brochures are available at dmv.ca.gov:
 - *Reporting Vehicle Status (Registration vs. Non-Operation)* (FFVR 01) Fast Facts
 - *Financial Responsibility (Insurance) Requirements for Vehicle Registration* (FFVR 18) Fast Facts
 - *Registering Commercial Vehicles and PTI Trailers* (FFVR 27) Fast Facts
 - *Registration Related Fees* (FFVR 34) Fast Facts